U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard

USCG Port Security Assessment
Best Practices Bulletin

Best Practice: Pay Telephone Accessible At Facility

Category:	Communications
Location First Observed:	Map Ta Phut, Thailand
Date First Observed:	June, 2005

Description:

A pay telephone installed outside the facility offices permits employees or visitors to notify authorities if they observe a security violation or safety incident.

Discussion:

Due to the increased popularity of cell phones, pay telephones are becoming increasingly hard to find. Many port facilities are in isolated areas, and a passer-by observing a security violation or suspicious person or vehicle may find it difficult to know how or who to report it, especially at night or on weekends. Facilities may consider retaining or installing pay telephones as a security and safety measure, to permit persons without cell phones to notify authorities if they observe a security or safety incident, or are victims of a crime. Pay telephones also serve as a back-up system to cell phones or radios if network problems cause these systems to fail. Pay telephones can be enhanced by clearly posting the numbers of police, fire, security, or the PFSO directly adjacent to the phone. A lighted booth or pay phone sign next to the phone will enhance its visibility at night. Installing the proper type of pay phone in a parking lot will permit a vehicle operator to use it without leaving the safety of their vehicle.   Many pay phones will call emergency numbers (e.g. 9-1-1 in the USA) without requiring the user to insert any money.

Potential Down-side:

None, other than possible cost. In some areas, if pay telephone use is inadequate for the phone company to make money, they will charge a user for the privilege of having a pay phone installed and maintained.

Conclusion:

In many cases it makes sense for a medium to large facility to install a pay telephone booth in a highly visible public area. Employees and members of the public can use it to report security incidents, fire, or safety emergencies, as well as for routine use.

Cost:

$0.00 - $40/month